

Maine Department of Education

Protocols for Reporting State Assessment Testing Irregularities

The protocol for testing irregularities is outlined below. Additionally, a chart is provided at the end of the second section to identify the procedures that should happen in the case of an irregularity.

I. Testing Irregularities Involving Students

- A. Incidents must be reported to the Assessment Coordinator, who will immediately contact the school Principal about the reported incident and explain the following Department protocol:
 - 1) The Principal shall conduct an investigation with staff and student(s), as appropriate, notify parents, and enforce their local policy on cheating, if applicable. The investigation shall occur as soon as possible after discovering/being alerted to the irregularity.
 - 2) The Principal shall send a letter to the Assessment Coordinator within one week of his/her investigation documenting the incident, the investigation, and the results of the investigation. Depending on the situation, the Principal will have been instructed by Maine DOE to include the student(s)' names, MEDMS ID numbers, grade level, the affected content area, the affected test question numbers, and the answer booklet form number and bar code number. The letter must state whether test security had been addressed with students and staff prior to testing and whether, in the Principal's opinion, test security was violated.
- B. A Department team composed of the Chief Academic Officer, Assessment & Accountability Director, and the Assessment Coordinator will screen the documentation within one week of receipt and make a determination about whether to invalidate some scores. If the investigation leads to questions about teacher or administrator conduct in relation to the administration of the assessment, the team will move to following the process outlined in Section II of this protocol. The Assessment Director will send a written letter to the superintendent and the principal to inform them of the actions and determinations.
- C. The Assessment Director or designee shall maintain files of all correspondence and reports.
- D. The Assessment Director or designee will review the report and its recommendations to ensure that all appropriate actions called for in the report have been carried out before closing the file.
- E. The Department will consult with the testing contractor in any situation for which invalidation of student, school or SAU test scores is being considered by the Commissioner; and the Department will notify the testing contractor in writing as soon as the Commissioner makes a determination that student, school or SAU test scores must be invalidated.

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- F. The Department will determine how disallowed student score(s) will be factored into school and SAU assessment reports and AYP determinations.
- G. The Assessment & Accountability Director or designee will compile an annual report to share with the Commissioner with information about all testing irregularities across the state, including basic information and the results of each incident.

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II. Testing Irregularities involving Teacher(s) or Administrator(s)

- A. Incidents must be reported to the Assessment Coordinator, who will immediately contact the school Principal* about the reported incident and explain the following Department protocol for response:
- 1) The Principal* shall conduct an investigation with staff and student(s), as appropriate, as soon as possible after discovering/being alerted to the irregularity.
 - 2) Upon completion on the investigation, the Principal* shall send a letter to the Assessment Coordinator documenting the incident, the investigation, and the results of the investigation. The letter must state whether test security had been addressed with staff prior to testing and whether, in the Principal's* opinion, test security was violated.
 - 3) The Principal* shall assure that testing answer booklets for all students at the grade level affected by this incident are coded with a unique number identifying their teacher prior to testing materials being returned.

* In the event the reported incident involves a Principal, the Superintendent or designee is substituted for "Principal" throughout this Section II.

- B. A Department team composed of the Chief Academic Officer, Assessment & Accountability Director, and the Assessment Coordinator will screen the documentation within one week of receipt and make a determination about whether to invalidate scores and whether to forward its findings to the Commissioner who will decide if further investigation is needed.
- C. Based on the team follow up, a written report with recommendations will be provided to the Commissioner as soon as is practical upon completion of any investigation.
- D. The Commissioner will decide within one week whether to order one or more of the following actions:
- 1) further investigation;
 - 2) delay in reporting student, school, or SAU results;
 - 3) invalidation of student, school or SAU results; and/or
 - 4) investigation by the Department of Education for possible certification action.

The Commissioner will share the decision with the team, which will carry out (or assign as appropriate to others) the actions recommended. The team will monitor to ensure the actions/recommendations are carried out, including sharing information with the certification office for inquiry and possible investigation, if applicable.

- E. If upon review of the written report (part C), the Commissioner determines that a certification review is necessary the information will be forwarded to the certification office

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so that an inquiry/investigation can be properly conducted. The certification office will report independently to the Commissioner.

- F. A written response will be sent to the Superintendent by the Commissioner within one week or as soon thereafter as practical of the completion of the investigation and report (not including any certification inquiry/investigation). The response will outline the outcome of the Department's investigation and resultant recommendations and determinations. The State Assessment Director or designee shall maintain files of all correspondence and reports with the exception of any certification reports and/or findings.
- G. The Assessment & Accountability Director or designee will review the report and its recommendations to ensure that all appropriate actions called for in the report have been carried out before closing the file. This does not include any Certification activity, beyond the initial sharing of the Commissioner's request for inquiry with the Certification office.
- H. The Department will consult with the testing contractor in any situation for which invalidation of student, school or SAU test scores is being considered by the Commissioner; and the Department will notify the testing contractor in writing as soon as the Commissioner makes a determination that student, school or SAU test scores must be invalidated.
- I. The Department will determine how disallowed student score(s) will be factored into school and SAU assessment reports and AYP determinations.

The following chart provides procedures for handling certain unusual occurrences.

- Review these pages so you and each test administrator will know how to handle such situations for individuals and groups of students.
- The Principal/Test Coordinator must submit the Test Irregularity Report as instructed on the chart below. Type or print legibly and completely so that your report can be interpreted accurately.
- The Test Irregularity Report should be submitted to the Assessment Coordinator by fax 207-624-6771 within 24 hours of the incident.

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Group Situations	Procedure/Policy	Test Administrator Action	Principal/Test Coordinator Action
Mistiming of Session			
Too little time given	<p>Permit students to make up time on an under timed session before allowing a break or dismissing them so they do not have an opportunity to discuss the test before resuming work on the affected section. Allow the full number of minutes on all other sessions.</p> <p>If a new session has started or students have been dismissed. The session cannot be resumed.</p>	Inform the Principal/Test Coordinator that too little time was given and the procedure that was followed.	If the session cannot be resumed, inform the parents of the students impacted of the mistiming. No irregularity report is needed.
Too much time given	Give the full number of minutes on all the other sessions.	Teacher should report to Principal/Test Coordinator that too much time was given.	Report the amount of excess time and affected session(s). List the names of the students involved in the over timing.
Environment			
Disturbance	<p>Reduce or eliminate source of disturbance (loud noise, excessive heat/cold, etc.) if possible.</p> <p>If the disturbance requires stopping of the session, follow the guidelines for an interruption.</p>	Alert the Principal/Test Coordinator of the disturbance.	Reduce or eliminate source of disturbance (loud noise, excessive heat/cold, etc.) if possible. Inform the parents of the students impacted by the disturbance. No irregularity report is needed.
Interruption	Provide clear instructions for safety of students if fire alarm, power failure, etc., occurs. Note the time and take action to be sure no one has access to test materials while students are out of the room. Direct students not to discuss the test and monitor the group the entire time. Students should resume testing in the session they were completing before the interruption occurred. Subtract the time they were given before the interruption and allow the remainder for the students to complete the session.	Inform the Principal/Test Coordinator of the procedure that was followed.	Inform the parents of the students impacted by the interruption. Submit an irregularity report. List the names of the students involved by the interruption.
Prohibited materials-	All reference materials printed or attached to walls and/or student desks should be removed or covered. Any displayed materials in the classroom that interfere with proper test administration are not permitted. It is not possible to list all classroom materials that may potentially create an advantage or disadvantage for students during testing; if in doubt remove or cover the materials, or reposition students' desks so the material cannot be viewed.	Inform the Principal/Test Coordinator of the prohibited material/s that student had access to.	Submit an irregularity report. List the names of the students involved. Inform the parents of the students impacted.

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Individual Situations	Procedure/Policy	Test Administrator Action	Principal/Test Coordinator Action
Student Behavior			
Misconduct	Change seat of any student suspected of giving or receiving information.	Inform the Principal/Test Coordinator of the misconduct and the actions taken. Be sure to identify the items/session the misconduct occurred.	Submit an irregularity report. List the names of the student/s involved. Inform the parents of the students impacted.
Prohibited material	The following devices and/or calculators with the following features are prohibited: pocket organizers, handheld or laptop computers (except as specified in the administration manual), electronic writing pads or pen input devices, cellular telephones or other wireless communications devices, and calculators with QWERTY keyboards. Additionally, the use of a calculator on the non-calculator session,	Inform the Principal/Test Coordinator of the use of the prohibited material	Contact the Maine DOE immediately and complete an irregularity report.
Misplaced answers	Make note of the misplaced answers. Label the answers to show the questions they are answering. Assist the student with working in the correct location of the test. Place a note on school letterhead stating the issue and return using a Special Handling Envelope.	Inform the Principal/Test Coordinator of the Misplaced Answers	Contact the Maine DOE if you have any questions. No irregularity report is needed.
Student leaves during test	Prior to the beginning of the testing window, inform parents of the testing schedule and request that appointments be made outside of the testing schedule. When a situation arises that a student must leave during the middle of a session, note the time that has expired in the session and the item that the student has left off on. Subtract the time they were given before the dismissal and allow the remainder for the student to complete the session. The student should not have access to any of the items they had worked on in the session prior to the dismissal.	Inform the Principal/Test Coordinator that the student has been dismissed in the middle of a session	Complete the irregularity report and submit to the MDOE.
Accommodations			
Read aloud of the reading test	The read aloud accommodation (P3) is not allowed for the reading test. If it is used, all reading items in the session/s in which the read aloud was provided will be scored as incorrect.	Inform the Principal/Test Coordinator of the use of the read aloud accommodation for the reading test	Submit an irregularity report. List the names of the student/s involved. Inform the parents of the students impacted.
Unapproved scribe for writing test Or Not following the establish guidelines for scribing	The use of a scribe for students dictating a response to the writing test may only be used under limited circumstances and must be approved prior to use by the MDOE.	Inform the Principal/Test Coordinator of the unapproved use of the scribe for the writing test or that the guidelines for scribing were not followed.	Submit an irregularity report. List the names of the student/s involved. Inform the parents of the students impacted.